

Myth or reality?

Local fishermen in The Disko Bay tell of marine animals originating from the east coast, but which suddenly appear on the west coast. Some believe that the animals arrive into the bay together with the huge icebergs that are fed by the glacier in the Icefiord just south of the town Ilulissat in Northern Greenland.

Old ancient stories from local Inuits also reported that there was a sound or a channel that connected the west coast to the east coast.

Nowadays the local hunters have learned that a beluga whale that was trapped in The Disko Bay shortly before had been tagged outside Illoqqortoormiit on the east coast.

The whale would not have been able to swim the long stretch to the south of Greenland and back north to The Disko Bay. If a corridor across Greenland existed, the whale could benefit from the tidal movement in the direction from east to west and get to The Disko Bay within a short time.

In the 1700s, European travellers navigated to Greenland using a detailed Dutch map of Greenland. The map included the knowledge

about the geography at the time. On the map there was drawn a sound across the ice sheet. On the west coast the sound ended near The Ice Fiord at Ilulissat.

The Ice Sheet is still unmapped; especially there is uncertainty about its eternal movements and about what is beyond the kilometre-thick ice cap.

This uncertainty was fully exposed by scientists a few years ago. Using radar technology they for the first time found, what they called the Grand Canyon of the Greenland beyond the ice sheet.

This canyon is huge. The researchers estimated the canyon to a longitude of more than 750 kilometres, eighty metres deep and ten kilometres wide. Arizona's Grand Canyon and Tibet's Yarlung Tsangpo Grand Canyon is deeper, but the Grand Canyon of Greenland is the longest canyon on the earth.

The Grand Canyon of Greenland was found four years ago. Will researchers in the years to come find a sound or a system of glacial water streams across the Greenland ice sheet?



The Ice Fiord, Ilulissat,
North Greenland,
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